

REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated February 10, 2005. Claims 139-165 are pending, with claims 139, 154 and 165 being in independent form. Claims 1-138 were previously canceled. By this Amendment, claim 163 has been amended to correct an obvious typographical error, and claims 139, 154 and 165 have been amended to clarify the claimed invention. Support for the claim amendment can be found in the application at, for example, page 10, line 23 through page 11, line 18. Accordingly, Applicants maintain that no new matter is introduced by this Amendment.

The title was objected to as purportedly not descriptive.

By this Amendment, the title has been amended.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the title is respectfully requested.

Claim 163 was objected to as purportedly having informalities.

By this Amendment, claim 163 has been amended to correct an obvious typographical error.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to claim 163 is respectfully requested.

Claims 139, 141, 148-153 and 165 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Japanese Patent Publication No. JP 08-292636 (Oishi) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,740,507 to Ichikawa et al. Claim 140 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Oishi in view of Ichikawa and further in view of Japanese Patent Publication No. JP 03-241372 (Kitajima). Claims 142-147 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Oishi in view of Ichikawa and further in view of Japanese Patent Publication No. 06-175490 (Yabaneta). Claims 154-156 and 164 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Kitajima in view of Ichikawa. The Office Action stated that claims 157-163 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would

be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants have carefully considered the Examiner's comments and the cited art, and respectfully submit that independent claims 139, 154 and 165 as amended are patentable over the cited art, for at least the following reasons.

The present application relates to toner containers which employ a blow system for toner replenishment. Such a blow system may comprise, for example, an air pump, nozzle, toner conduit and air conduit. Applicants found that when such a toner container packed with toner to a packing density of 0.7 g/cm^3 or less is used along with a blow system for toner replenishment, toner can be stably and reliably replenished from the toner container, with a minimal amount of toner remaining in the toner container, such as discussed in the application at page 35, line 15 through page 36, line 2.

Such toner containers may have various configurations. For example, each of independent claims 139 and 165 includes the feature that the toner container comprises an air filter window in one of a bottom and a wall of the toner container which allows air within the container to escape. Independent claim 154 includes the feature that the toner container comprises a sack formed of a flexible material, and a toner outlet through which toner can be discharged from the sack.

Oishi, as understood by Applicant, is directed to toner container with a toner supply mechanism which comprises a container and a shutter. When the toner container is placed in an inverted, upright position, the shutter is pulled to allow toner to be drawn out of the container, and at the same time the shutter opens an air vent at an upper part of the container which allows air to be released.

Ichikawa, as understood by Applicant, is directed to a toner container which allows dense

packing of toner in the container. Although Ichikawa mentions conventional packing techniques which only permit low packing density, for example, in a range of 0.30 to 0.36 g/c³, Ichikawa indicates that a high packing density is desired.

Neither Oishi nor Ichikawa teaches a toner container configured for toner replenishment through a blow system comprising an air pump, a nozzle, a toner conduit and an air conduit, said toner container, wherein when said sack is packed with toner to a packing density determined by dividing a weight (g) of the toner by a capacity (cm³) of said toner container, said packing density is 0.7 g/cm³ or less, as provided by the claimed invention of this application.

Kitajima, as understood by Applicant, is directed to a toner container with a flexible housing, whereby after toner replenishment is complete, the toner container is folded to stop toner flow.

Yabaneta, as understood by Applicant, is directed to a toner replenishment system which includes a suction device for drawing toner out of a toner container into a hopper.

Applicant does not find disclosure or suggestion in the cited art, however, of a toner container configured for toner replenishment through a blow system comprising an air pump, a nozzle, a toner conduit and an air conduit, said toner container, wherein when said sack is packed with toner to a packing density determined by dividing a weight (g) of the toner by a capacity (cm³) of said toner container, said packing density is 0.7 g/cm³ or less, as provided by the claimed invention of this application.

Accordingly, for at least the above-stated reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 139, 154 and 165, and the claims depending therefrom, are patentable over the cited art.

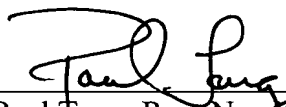
If a petition for an extension of time is required to make this response timely, this paper should be considered to be such a petition. The Office is hereby authorized to charge any fees that

may be required in connection with this amendment and to credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a telephone interview could advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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